



# NEWS RELEASE

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## ***SBA ADMINISTRATOR SELECTS SMALL BUSINESS EXECUTIVE TO HEAD SBA's REGION VIII***

***Region VIII: Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah & Wyoming***

**WASHINGTON** – The Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, Aida Alvarez, today announced the selection of Kathleen Piper, a small business owner from South Dakota, as the new regional administrator for the SBA's Region VIII. The region encompasses Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming.

As regional administrator, Ms. Piper will oversee the delivery of SBA's financial assistance, business development and counseling programs in the six-state region.

**"It is important that we have someone representing the SBA who is familiar with both the region and the needs of the small business community,"** said Administrator Alvarez. **"Ms. Piper's combined knowledge as an experienced entrepreneur and small business advocate will make her a highly effective regional administrator."**

"SBA programs are critically important to the growth and development of small businesses across the country. I am extremely pleased that someone of Kathleen's talent and experience has been selected to administer the programs in Region VIII," Senator Tom Daschle said. "Kathleen's judgement, skill and tireless work will make her an effective advocate for small business owners in South Dakota and throughout the country."

Ms. Piper currently serves as vice president of the Pied Piper Flower Shop, Inc. in Yankton, S.D. She and her husband Jim have co-managed the retail flower business since 1975. Under their direction, Pied Piper Flower Shop has won numerous awards for design and customer service, including being selected in 1997 as Yankton's Best Flower Shop by consumers in the area. The Pipers also rank in the top 1000 shops by FTD, a national floral network.

Ms. Piper is a county commissioner with the Yankton County. In 1992, she participated in President Clinton's Economic Summit and was a delegate to the White House Conference on Small Business in 1995. Her community service activities include serving on the board of the Lewis and Clark Mental Health Center and the advisory boards to the South Dakota Human Service Center, the Federal Prison Camp, the Chamber of Commerce and Interchange. Ms. Piper frequently speaks to high school student government groups, college students and community organizations about women's issues, politics, retail business and local government. Ms. Piper attended the University of Iowa, Morningside College and Mount Marty College.

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SBA's Region VIII, headquartered in Denver, Colo., has 131 permanent employees in seven offices, and a loan portfolio of 3,427 loans totaling more than \$617 million. Management counseling and training for the region's small businesses are provided by 24 chapters of the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE) -- a volunteer organization that provides free business counseling, six Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), and 52 SBDC service delivery locations.

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*The U.S. Small Business Administration, established in 1953, provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their businesses. With a portfolio of business loans, loan guarantees and disaster loans worth more than \$45 billion, the SBA is the nation's largest single financial backer of small businesses. Last year, the SBA offered management and technical assistance to more than one million small business owners. The SBA also plays a major role in the government's disaster relief efforts by making low-interest recovery loans to both homeowners and businesses.*

*America's 23 million small businesses employ more than 50 percent of the private workforce, generate more than half of the nation's gross domestic product, and are the principal source of new jobs in the U.S. economy.*

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